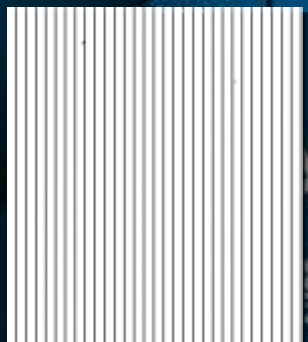


# **H1N1 and Kentucky K-12 Schools**

**Terry Holliday, Ph.D.  
Commissioner  
Kentucky  
Department of Education**

**September 3, 2009**



# Headlines tell the story...

## Junction City school closed for flu

8-18-09  
By EMILY TOADY  
emily@mmnews.com

"We started out with 38. That  
... then doubled."

Boyle County

## Swine flu found in Marshall

BY MICHAEL DE LOS REYES  
mde losreyes@paducahsun.com

8-18-09  
DRAFFENVILLE, Ky. — Two confirmed cases of swine flu surfaced in Marshall County schools on Friday, according to the Marshall

County Public Health Department. The health department verified Friday afternoon that a student at Sharpe Elementary and another at

CONTINUED FROM

Lovett would whether the student had been excused from school. But he said that Marshall County emphasize communications to prevent the flu. The letter that children their hands re

## Flu closes second Ky. school

8-18-09  
State

## Oldham County student has swine flu

District won't identify school

By Sara Cunningham  
scunningham@courier-journal.com  
The Courier-Journal 8-20-09

An Oldham County Schools student has a confirmed case of swine flu, district officials said Wednesday.

The letter includes information about the flu and the importance of hand-washing and staying home when sick. It also says the district will consult with local health officials before deciding to dismiss students early or close a school due to the flu.

"We'll wait and see what happens," Superintendent Paul Upchurch said. "We'll do whatever it takes to keep kids safe."

Pamela Collins, whose son at

in the new school year.

An elementary school in Letcher County closed Tuesday after 16 students were sent home with flu-like symptoms. Tests are being done to determine whether those students had the H1N1 virus. An elementary school in Boyle County closed after one child had a confirmed case of swine flu and staff members and other students also reported flu-like symptoms.

The Kentucky Department for

Seasonal flu cases usually don't start popping up until October and peak in January or February, Hacker said. The reason for the early start most likely is the new swine flu virus, but that's not a reason to panic, he said, adding that the symptoms of swine flu are no more serious than the regular seasonal flu so far.

When swine flu cases were reported in the spring, health departments and the CDC were recom-

ating level

of cases doctors nts with they as- ses are tal flu

## H1N1 case confirmed at SLMS

8-18-09  
Principal: Student who had 'mild to moderate' case has recovered

STAFF

Letters ha parents of Middle Se alerting t dent at th tracted, from, a H1N1 fl The l advise receiv cone Sout wh

# ...H1N1 is having an impact on Kentucky's schools

# Potential School Impact

- More than 1,250 K-12 public schools
- 671,000 students
- 52,000 certified staff
- 48,000 classified staff



# H1N1 School Impact

- First effects last spring
- Expected to be more widespread
- Resurgence of seasonal flu this fall and winter
- H1N1 takes toll in children/young adults





# Week Ending 8/22/09



# From: CDC

**“Let our advance worrying  
become advance thinking  
and planning.”**

**--Winston Churchill**

# Schools' Role

- Important in battling infectious disease
- Immunization programs
- Aggressive use of education, prevention and mitigation techniques





# KDE Role

- Working with DPH and CHFS to help and advise schools, conduit for info
- Take guidance from DoEd, DHS, DHHS and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention





# **New CDC Guidelines**

- **Decision making at the local level based on local info**
- **Need to balance risk of illness with benefits of keeping students in school**
- **Shorten stay-home time for ill students/staff**



# New CDC Guidelines

- Additional steps to take if outbreak becomes more severe or widespread



# Flu Information for Schools

[www.flu.gov](http://www.flu.gov)

Click on “Plan and Prepare”  
Select “School Planning” tab

[www.education.ky.gov](http://www.education.ky.gov)

Select “H1N1 Flu Updates”





# **Schools' Role**

➤ **Mitigation**

➤ **Surveillance**

➤ **Vaccination**

➤ **Communication**



# Mitigation

- **Prevention is our best defense and education our best weapon**



# Mitigation

- Proper hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette





# Mitigation

- Proper hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette
- Recognize symptoms



# Mitigation

- Proper hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette
- Recognize symptoms
- Symptomatic students/staff stay home at least 24 hours after fever free w/o meds



# Mitigation

- Isolating those who are sick at school
- Regularly cleaning (no special cleaners necessary)
- Using social distancing





# School Closure



# School Closure

➤ **NOT** the best option in most cases



# School Closure

- NOT the best option in most cases
- Must be local decision based on local information





# School Closure

- NOT the best option in most cases
- Must be local decision based on local information
- Carefully weigh negatives against the possible benefit



# School Closure

- Consider what to do about activities and athletic events
- Parents need to plan NOW for:
  - sick children at home
  - childcare if school has to close



# School Closure

- **KRS 157.320**
  - ADA formula on which per pupil funding is based
- **702 KAR 7:125**
  - Operational procedure for emergency disaster days



# School Decision

- Match the severity of the illness
- Based on what's best for health of students/staff
- Made in consultation with local public health officials





# School Closure

- Schools must plan for continuity of learning during extended school absences or closure
- DofEd recommendations on strategies, resource opportunities and best practices



# Surveillance

- Begin collecting data in early September
- Done through the existing SIS to minimize impact on districts
- New codes for “influenza-like illness” and schools “closed due to illness”



# Surveillance

- Data to DPH each day on total daily attendance, absences attributable to influenza-like-illness and school closings due to illness
- CHF responsible for communicating to CDC and public



# H1N1 Vaccination Program

- Targets those at highest risk including school-age children
- Likely 2 doses, 3+ weeks apart
- Free, available mid-October
- Encourage schools to partner with local health department for clinics





# Communication

➤ “Words are the most powerful drug used by mankind.”

\_\_Rudyard Kipling

➤ Informs; avoids panic



# KDE Communication

- Letter to superintendents – July 31
- Information on KDE Web site
- Second letter to superintendents – August 21 with updated CDC guidelines



# Communication

- Most schools have sent letters home
- Parents should know how school communicates dismissal/closure info and monitor for updates



# Preparing for the Flu

(Including 2009 H1N1 Flu)

A Communication Toolkit for Schools (Grades K-12)





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Select “H1N1 Flu Updates”



# Bottom Line for Schools

- Health and safety of students and staff of most importance
- Must try to maximize learning
- Be proactive in planning and response
- Cooperation, flexibility and understanding vital

